

Eastport Clothing Store Closes Its Door

One of the largest stores in Eastport, which has been a landmark for over fifty years, closed its doors last week. Berman's Clothing Store was known not only in Eastport but on the Canadian Islands and surrounding communities in Maine for its tremendous line of men's, women's and children's clothing, its footwear and in former days for millinery. Also during "Quoddy" days, they carried furniture on the second floor.

The store was originally on the east side of Water Street, established by Samuel D. Kramer when he moved to Eastport from New York City. In 1918 he married Ruth Wolff of New York City and she helped in the store until her retirement in 1962—for fifteen years after her husband died in 1947. After her retirement the store was owned jointly by her son, Morton Berman and her son-in-law, Nathan Cohen. When Morton moved to Bangor to enter the brokerage business in 1967, Nathan Cohen became the sole owner and ran the store with the help of his wife, Miriam Berman Cohen.

When business was booming in Eastport, the store always had three clerks to help serve customers—Nellie Camick, Della Stoddard, Susie Cassidy and during "Quoddy" six additional Sea-bee wives. The store was always open Saturday night—the big night of the week—and Ted Taylor in his column in this issue remarks about how deserted Water Street is on a Saturday night now days.

"Sam" Berman will always be remembered not only for his clothing store but for his interest in the Quoddy Power Project and community affairs and the help he provided to get other businesses established in Eastport. He started a policy of special orders—"if we don't have it, we'll get it for you", and this policy was continued until the store's closing.

Many people, on both sides of the border will recall outfitting the whole family at "Berman's"—not only with clothing, but it was a fine place to buy your hip rubber boots. The fishermen also, at one time bought cotton batting there—not for their wives quilts but they would soak them

in kerosene, but the bats on a stick, light the torches and use them in the bay for fishing at night.

Morton Berman continued his father's interest in community affairs, and served many years on the School Board, was President of the Chamber of Commerce, a member of the Rotary Club, the K. of P., and the Masons. He has continued his community activities in Bangor where he is active in the Lions organization and was President of B'nai Brith for the Bangor Chapter of Eastern Maine. His sister, Miriam, has helped in the store a good many years and was active in organizing the Girl Scouts again in Eastport, and other community activities but her greatest satisfaction has been in the growth of the L. Brooks Varney Scholarship Fund.

Nathan Cohen, who has been the owner of the clothing store for the past few years, like his wife and brother-in-law and father-in-law has been very active in community affairs and is looking forward to his second term on the Governor's Council. Not only has he been active in the Democratic Party in various capacities, but has served on the Eastport City Council, held offices in the Eastport and Washington County Chamber of Commerce, is on the Eastport Memorial Hospital and Peavey Memorial Library Board of Directors, is Treasurer of the local branch of the Salvation Army, and is serving his second term on the Maine Health Facilities Authority. He has always been interested in promoting activities to Eastport and Washington County—spearheaded obtaining a new breakwater and helped in getting new auditorium.

On February 10, 1928, a fire destroyed Berman's Store which was located where Newberry's is now and after the fire Sam Berman built the present store—one of the most modern in the State of Maine. This month, as many family owned stores in small towns, it has closed its doors but many people in the Quoddy area will remember going to "Berman's" when it was filled with clothing—a hubbub of activity on a busy main street, especially on a Saturday night.

Quoddy Tides 1974